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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-15

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 1367

E.O. 12065: GDS 2/25/80 (DUBOSE, R.) OR-P
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: SEAGA WADES IN

1. (U) SUMMARY: AT A A MASS RALLY CALLED TO LAUNCH THE JAMAICA LABOR PAR[illegible] (JLP) CAMPAIGN FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, OPPOSITION LEADER EDWARD SEAGA LASHED OUT AT THE POLICIES OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP). THE SPEECH CONCENTRATED ON ATTACK AND REVEALED LITTLE OF MR. SEAGA'S PLANS FOR JAMAICA, SHOULD HE ASSUME POWER AFTER THE ELECTIONS. THE FOCUS OF THE ATTACK WAS DIRECTED AT THE PROBLEMS OF THE ECONOMY WHICH HE CLAIMED WOULD CAUSE THE LOSS OF 30 TO 50 THOUSAND JOBS BY JUNE. SEAGA ALSO DEMANDED THAT THE ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER, NOT BEFORE AND NOT AFTER. HE CHARGED THAT UNSPECIFIED FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, I.E., CUBA AND THE USSR, WERE INTERFERING IN JAMAICA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY SUPPLYING CARS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT TO THE PNP FOR THE CAMPAIGN. AND ONCE AGAIN, HE ATTACKED HIS LONGSTANDING ENEMY, CUBA, BY CHARGING THAT THE CUBAN PLANES BEING BROUGHT IN TO SPRAY CROPS COULD BE USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) EDWARD SEAGA GOT THE JLP ELECTION CAMPAIGN OFF TO A ROUSING START ON FEBRUARY 15. SPEAKING BEFORE A LARGE PARTISAN CROWD, ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 50,000, THE OPPOSITION LEADER PREDICTED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE CURRENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE SHORTAGE, FROM 30 TO 50 THOUSAND JAMAICAN WORKERS WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS BEFORE JUNE. LAYING THE BLAME ON THE INABILITY OF THE COUNTRY TO IMPORT RAW MATERIALS FOR ITS FACTORIES, HE CLAIMED THAT EVEN IF THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY FOR IMPORTS, THERE WOULD STILL BE SIX WEEKS TO THREE MONTHS DELAY BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE ORDERS. SEAGA CRITICIZED THE PNP'S POOR MANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY. DISCOUNTING THE GOVERNMENT'S USE OF THE PRICE OF OIL TO EXPLAIN ITS FAILURES, THE JLP LEADER POINTED OUT THAT THE INCREASE IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS FROM THE BAUXITE LEVY (IMPOSED AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE OIL CRISIS) OF US$915 MILLION MORE THAN MADE UP FOR THE ADDITIONAL US$450 MILLION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS FORCED TO PAY FOR ITS PETROLEUM IMPORTS. SEAGA THEN ASKED HIS AUDIENCE HOW JAMAICA COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT THE IMF, CONTINUING A RECENT JLP THEME THAT A GOVERNMENT FORMED BY THEIR PARTY WOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK THE FUND'S ASSISTANCE.

4. (U) SEAGA WENT ON TO DEMAND THAT THE ELECTIONS BE HELD IN OCTOBER, THE MONTH THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD ESTIMATED WAS THE EARLIEST THEY COULD BE HELD. HE WARNED THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO HOLD THE ELECTIONS EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER OCTOBER WOULD CAUSE THE JLP TO TAKE TO THE STREETS TO "LOCK UP THE COUNTRY SO THAT NOT EVEN RAIN WATER CAN GET INSIDE OF IT, AND IT (THE JLP) WILL NOT PULL (BACK) UNTIL MANLEY LEAVES THE GOVERNMENT." THE OPPOSITION LEADER STATED THAT IN NOVEMBER, UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, THE PNP GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE THE POWER TO RESTRUCTURE JAMAICA'S VOTING DISTRICTS AND THAT THE JLP WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY GERRYMANDERING WHICH MIGHT RESULT. HE FURTHER SAID THAT AN OCTOBER ELECTION WOULD HAVE TO BE HELD WITH THE "OLD CORRUPT VOTERS' LISTS" BUT THE JLP ACCEPTED THIS AS NECESSARY TO HAVE AN EARLY DECISION ON THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY.

5. (U) SEAGA CHARGED THE GOVERNMENT WITH OTHER MISCONDUCT. HE CLAIMED THAT THE PNP WAS BEING GIVEN CARS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT FOR THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN BY UNNAMED FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, AND SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT PNP SENATOR PAUL MILLER WAS AT THE MOMENT IN CUBA. HE DEEMED THIS UNACCEPTABLE INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF JAMAICA. HE ALSO CHARGED THAT THE STAGE HAD BEEN SET FOR A NEW STATE OF EMERGENCY TO BE DECLARED BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. THIS IS EVIDENCED BY A NEW WAVE OF ATTACKS ON JLP SUPPORTERS IN KINGSTON, AND ALSO THE RECENT REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE "CORRUPTION COMMISSION", ACCORDING TO SEAGA, SEEMS TO JUSTIFY THE FORMER STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THUS GAVE PRECEDENCE FOR A NEW ONE.

6. (U) CONTINUING THE INTERVENTION THESE, THE JLP LEADER CHARGED THAT CUBAN SPRAYING PLANES BEING BROUGHT TO JAMAICA TO TRY TO SAVE THE BANANA CROP FROM A CRIPPLING BLIGHT WERE IN REALITY AERIAL PHOTOMAPPING PLANES. THE PLANES CAN ALSO BE USED TO CARRY PARATROOPERS AND FOR OTHER MILITARY USES.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 1367

7. (C) COMMENT, SEAGA'S SPEECH WAS VINTAGE JAMAICAN POLITICIS. HE IS FOLLOWING THE PROVEN ELECTORAL STRATEGY OF AN OPPOSITION PARTY GOING AGAINST A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS IN REAL TROUBLE HE TALKS ABOUT THE FAILURES OF THE RULING PARTY AND ONLY PRESENTS A PROGRAM OF HIS OWN IN BITS AND PIECES. THE ONLY SEAGA STATEMENT WHIC COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A PART OF A JLP PROGRAM IS HIS RHETORICAL QUESTION ABOUT JAMAICA'S SURVIAL WITHOUT THE IMF. THE JLP HAS MADE
CLEAR THEIR POSITION THAT
THE IMF IS NECESSARY TO JAMAIC'S ECONOMIC SURVIVAL AND WILL BE DEPENDED UPON TO LEND SUPPORT TO REBUILD THE ECONOMY. THE STATEMENT ABOUT CUBAN PLANES IS PART OF SEAGA'S FOREIGN COMMUNIST DEVILS STRATEGY, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF JAMAICAN POLITICS HAS BEEN A STANDARD JLP PLAY FOR YEARS. THUS, FOR THE MOMENT THE JLP AHEAD IN THE POLLS, IS CONTENT TO BLAST THE PNP'S RECORD AND KEEP ITS OWN OPTIONS OPEN.
(DRAFTER DON WELLS)
LAWRENCE

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